

# IOC FRAMEWORK FOR SAFEGUARDING ATHLETES AND OTHER PARTICIPANTS FROM HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN SPORT (GAMES-TIME PERIOD) (HEREINAFTER THE “FRAMEWORK”)

## 1. PREAMBLE

The development of this Framework has been supported by the Medical and Scientific, Athletes', Athletes' Entourage, and Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commissions of the International Olympic Committee (the “**IOC**”). It is established pursuant to Recommendation 5 of Olympic Agenda 2020+5: “Further strengthen safe sport and the protection of clean athletes”, the related IOC Safe Sport Action Plan, and the IOC's mission and role to promote safe sport and the protection of athletes from all forms of harassment and abuse in accordance with Rule 2.18 of the Olympic Charter and Right 7 of the IOC Athletes' Rights and Responsibilities Declaration.

This Framework is further supported by Article 1.4 of the IOC Code of Ethics, which states that: “*Respect for the universal fundamental ethical principles is the foundation of Olympism*”, which include “*respect for international conventions on protecting human rights insofar as they apply to the Olympic Games' activities and which ensure in particular [...] rejection of all forms of harassment and abuse, be it physical, professional or sexual, and any physical or mental injuries.*”

**This Framework will be implemented taking into consideration the law of the Host Country for each edition of the Olympic Games (OG) and Youth Olympic Games (YOG).**

## 2. OBJECTIVE

This Framework is intended to help safeguard Athletes and other Participants from Harassment and Abuse during the Olympic Games- and Youth Olympic Games-time Periods (hereinafter “the **Games-time Period**”) by providing additional information and guidance regarding the IOC Code of Ethics' “*Rules of Procedure with respect to alleged violations of the Olympic Charter or of any other decision or applicable regulation, other than anti-doping rule violations, issued by the IOC or any IF or NOC, including in relation to disciplinary proceedings, on the occasion of the Olympic Games*”, applied *mutatis mutandis* to the YOG (hereinafter the “**Rules of Procedure**”).

This Framework does not replace any laws or regulations of the Host Country, IF or NOC, or any other IOC codes and regulations such as the Olympic Charter or the IOC Code of Ethics. Instead, the Framework is intended to supplement these with further specific information and guidance during the OG and YOG, in order to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all accredited Participants.

## 3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This Framework applies:

- a. to all Participants in the OG and YOG, as defined below;
- b. specifically for the Games-time Period;
- c. to alleged incidents of Harassment and Abuse.

## 4. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Framework:

- a. “**Athletes**” shall mean all individuals competing during the OGs and YOGs.
- b. “**Participants**” shall mean all those listed under Rule 59.2 of the Olympic Charter, namely, Athletes and teams, officials, managers and other members of any delegation, referees and jury members and all other accredited persons.

- c. The “**Olympic Games- and Youth Olympic Games-time Period**” or “the Games-time Period” shall mean the time between the opening and the closing of the Olympic Village(s) for the purposes of the OG and YOG, as specified in the “Olympic Games Guide (OGG) - Olympic and Paralympic Villages” and “Youth Olympic Games Guide - Olympic Villages”.
- d. “**Child**” shall mean “every human being below the age of eighteen” (as per the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)) at the time of the opening of the Olympic Village(s).
- e. “**Harassment and Abuse**” refers to Psychological/emotional violence, Physical violence, Sexual violence, together with Sexual harassment, Neglect, Abuse of authority/power and Online or digital violence.
- f. “**Psychological and/or emotional violence**” shall mean the intentional act against a person or collective force that results in physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social harm, including insults, threats, attacks or verbal abuse<sup>1</sup>.
- g. “**Physical violence**” is defined by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as “any form of physical aggression, namely hits (including with objects), punches, forced holding, choking and being forced to train while injured or ill”.
- h. “**Sexual violence**” is defined by the WHO as “... any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. In addition, sexual violence may also take place when someone is not able to give consent – for instance, when against children, while intoxicated, drugged, asleep or mentally incapacitated.”
- i. “**Sexual harassment**” is defined by the United Nations (UN) as “the manifestation of a culture of discrimination and privilege based on unequal gender relations and other power dynamics”.
- j. “**Neglect**” is defined by the WHO as “the failure of parents or carers, coaches or other persons with a duty of care towards the athletes to meet their physical and emotional needs when they have the means, knowledge and access to necessary services; or failure to protect her or him from exposure to danger”.
- k. “**Online or digital violence**” is defined by UN Women as “any act of violence that is committed, assisted or aggravated by the use of information and communication technology (such as mobile phones, social media, computer games, text messaging or email). Online violence can include **cyberbullying** (sending intimidating or threatening messages), **non-consensual sexting** (the sending of explicit messages or photos without the recipient’s consent) and **doxing** (the public release of private or identifying information about the victim).”
- a. “**Abuse of authority/power**” is defined by the UN as “the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority against another person”. This can include, but is not limited to, appointments, assignments, contract renewals, performance evaluations, working conditions or promotions, intimidation, threats, blackmail or coercion.
- b. “**Safe Sport**” is defined in the IOC Consensus Statement: harassment and abuse (non-accidental violence) in sport, 2016 as “an athletic environment which is respectful, equitable and free from all forms of non-accidental violence to athletes” and other participants and promotes a holistic approach to the physical and mental well-being of athletes.

#### Harassment and Abuse

- a. may occur in combination or in isolation;
- b. can include a one-off incident or a series of incidents;
- c. may be in person, online or by another form of communication;
- d. may result from an Abuse of authority, meaning the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority by an individual against another person;
- e. can be based on one or more forms of discrimination, including race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, socio-economic status and athletic ability;
- f. may be deliberate, unsolicited or coercive.

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<sup>1</sup> Ray, 2007; Peng et al., 2018.

## 5. EXPECTED STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR

The above definitions and the following standards of behaviour underline the principles by which a Participant's conduct may be challenged as a violation of this Framework, in accordance with the IOC Code of Ethics and the Rules of Procedure. Participants must:

### ALWAYS:

- a. **uphold** the laws of the Host Nation and all applicable sport codes, rules and regulations, and refrain from encouraging others to break any laws, rules or regulations;
- b. **ensure** that their intentions, actions and communications reflect a commitment to prioritising the safety and well-being of all Participants;
- c. **maintain** the highest standards of conduct, respect their position of authority and/or trust, and act in the best interest of children, young people and/or vulnerable persons;
- d. **be aware** of their own behaviour, maintain appropriate boundaries with others, and respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person without any form of discrimination;
- e. **stand against and report** any form of harassment and abuse, neglect, abuse of power, trust, influence or authority, bullying or any other behaviour that would reasonably be considered abusive amongst or towards any individuals.

### NEVER:

- f. **condone** or engage in any form of psychological, physical or sexual violence or neglect towards others;
- g. **engage** in physical or online activities that could reasonably be considered inappropriate or culturally insensitive towards others, especially children and other vulnerable persons;
- h. **make** or share comments or images that could be reasonably considered inappropriate, are demeaning or indecent, or place people at risk of physical, emotional or reputational damage.

If a Participant is made aware of a concern of harassment and/or abuse, they must consider the following:

- a. Be aware of the perspective of the Athlete or potential victim.
- b. Stay calm, try to listen actively, and do not prejudge or make negative comments about the person/organisation being accused.
- c. Avoid asking probing or leading questions.
- d. Do not make promises that cannot be kept, for example, do not promise to have someone removed.
- e. Ensure confidentiality while making it clear that information will be shared only with people who can help.
- f. Write down some notes when feasible in order to make the report as accurate as possible, using their own words where possible.
- g. Remember that **it is not your responsibility** to start an investigation, speak with people involved or acquire evidence.
- h. Keep the athlete/potential victim informed of the steps you are or will be taking.
- i. If needed, ask for help for your own well-being.
- j. Assess whether someone may be at imminent risk of harm. If so, report this immediately via the available avenues provided below (see section 9).

## 6. EDUCATION

IOC educational materials and other information regarding Harassment and Abuse in sport are available to Athletes and other Participants, including their respective entourages, prior to, during and after the Games-time Period. These are provided through the [Youth Olympic Games Athlete Education Programme](#), [Athlete 365 Learning](#), educational seminars and information on site at the Athlete365 zones, as well as on the [IOC's Safe Sport](#) and [Athlete365](#) websites. Materials provide information on Athletes' rights and responsibilities, what constitutes Harassment and Abuse, and where Athletes and other Participants and their respective entourages may report or seek further information, advice and support.

## **7. THE NOC ACCREDITED WELFARE OFFICER**

Welfare Officer accreditations are available for NOC delegations participating in the OG and YOG. Information on quotas and access rights are available in the Accreditation section of the noc.net Games Preparation Guide.

All Accredited Welfare Officers are required to be

- a. A nationally licensed and registered mental health practitioner, and/or
- b. An internationally certified safeguarding practitioner.

To encourage NOCs to train and appoint permanent members of staff as Safeguarding Officers, the IOC offers the possibility of extra Welfare Officer accreditation(s) (in addition to those included in the established quota) to NOC permanent staff members who have successfully completed the IOC Certificate: Safeguarding Officer in Sport course before the opening of the Olympic Village(s) or Youth Olympic Village(s).

NOC Accredited Welfare Officers are responsible for

- a. taking all reasonable steps to ensure that athletes' mental and physical well-being are prioritised and properly addressed;
- b. acting as the focal point for all safeguarding matters and matters related to mental health/well-being within the national team delegation during the Olympic Games and Youth Olympic Games-time Period, from the opening until the closing of the Olympic Village(s);
- c. liaising with the IOC Safeguarding Officer(s) on duty should a concern or an allegation of harassment or abuse arise; and
- d. knowing the specific safeguarding measures implemented for the OG or YOG, and the avenues available for reporting concerns.

## **8. THE IOC SAFEGUARDING OFFICER**

IOC Safeguarding Officers (or a delegate designated by the IOC Safeguarding Officers), will be present in the Olympic Village(s) throughout the Games-time Period, and will support and follow up on all reported incidents of Harassment and Abuse as per the Rules of Procedure. Specifically, the IOC Safeguarding Officers will be responsible for

- a. liaising with the NOC Accredited Welfare Officers, the Olympic Games or Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee, the athletes' psychologist, psychiatrist and/or medical team as required;
- b. documenting all reports of Harassment and Abuse during the Games-time Period;
- c. providing subject matter expert support during investigations of Harassment and Abuse covered by this Framework;
- d. assisting with coordinating the submission of reports to the IOC administration and IOC Disciplinary Commission, if required;
- e. providing support to ensure notification of reports to local authorities, as appropriate and necessary pursuant to local law (NB: the local authorities are responsible for determining whether to conduct a criminal investigation in relation to an alleged incident); and
- f. providing or facilitating support to any people concerned.

## 9. REPORTING AND ADDRESSING INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT AND ABUSE

Details regarding the procedure for addressing incidents of harassment and abuse that occur during the Games-time Period, including investigating and resolving such incidents, are described in the *IOC Code of Ethics "Rules of Procedure"*, which apply to both the OG and the YOG.

- a. The IOC Safeguarding Officer(s), the IOC Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer and/or the IOC Legal Affairs Director may be informed by any person and by any means of an alleged violation related to this Framework.
- b. Any person who witnesses or suspects an incident of Harassment and Abuse during the Games-time Period must report such incident through the reporting channels detailed in Section 9.f. below.
- c. In the case of a report involving a Child as the alleged perpetrator of Harassment and Abuse, the NOC's Welfare Officer and the parents or legal guardian of the Child, as detailed in the "Conditions of Participation" form (Appendix 1), must be informed.
- d. In the case of a report involving a Child as the alleged victim or third-party witness of Harassment and Abuse, the NOC's Welfare Officer and the parents or legal guardian of the Child, as detailed in the "Conditions of Participation" form (Appendix 1), should be informed, provided that doing so is not considered to represent a risk for the Child's safety or welfare.
- e. If informing the parents or legal guardian as per Section 9.d is considered to represent a risk for the Child's safety or welfare, another person attending the OG or YOG within the same delegation as the Child in an official capacity (preferably the delegation's appointed NOC Welfare Officer, the Chef de Mission or an official in a legal capacity) must be informed, provided that doing so is not considered to represent a risk for the Child's safety or welfare.
- f. The channels available for reporting any alleged incident of Harassment and Abuse will be communicated prior to the Games-time Period. Available reporting channels include:
  - The IOC Safeguarding Officer(s) and/or the delegate designated by the IOC Safeguarding Officer(s) present in the Olympic Village(s).
  - The [safeguardingofficer@olympic.org](mailto:safeguardingofficer@olympic.org) email address.
  - The [IOC Integrity and Compliance Hotline](#).
  - The IOC staff working in the dedicated Safe Sport areas in the Olympic Village(s).
  - The Safe Sport sections of the Athlete 365 website, available at [Safe Sport - Athlete365 \(olympics.com\)](#).
- g. Reports of Harassment and Abuse may be made in writing or verbally. The IOC Safeguarding Officer(s) must ensure that all reports are documented. This documentation must include the name, title, address, contact information and signature of the reporting person. The documentation should also include information pertaining to the accused person(s)/organisation(s), together with the reasons and basis for the report, including any evidence which might suggest that Harassment and Abuse have occurred. Based on the particular facts as detailed in the reports, the IOC Safeguarding Officer(s) may inform the IOC Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer and/or the IOC Legal Affairs Director, who will determine how to proceed with each case in line with the Rules of Procedure.

## **10. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

Any alleged incident of Harassment and Abuse during the Games-time Period which may constitute a breach of this Framework or Article 1.4 of the IOC Code of Ethics that has not been resolved in accordance with Article 4 of the Rules of Procedure may give rise to the IOC initiating disciplinary proceedings, including forming an ad-hoc IOC Disciplinary Commission (see Article 6 of the Rules of Procedure). The measures and sanctions which may be taken are further described in Article 10 of the Rules of Procedure and in the Olympic Charter.

## **11. CONFIDENTIALITY**

- a. In all matters pertaining to an alleged incident of Harassment and Abuse, in particular reports of Harassment and Abuse, personal and identifying information of the people concerned, other information gathered during investigations, and results of investigations (“Confidential Information”) must be regarded as confidential and handled in accordance with applicable laws and the IOC Privacy Policy.
- b. The IOC may disclose Confidential Information to appropriate people or authorities (subject to applicable laws) if: (i) a failure to disclose such information may cause harm to someone, or (ii) such information relates to a potential unlawful activity that comes to the IOC’s attention.
- c. Decisions pursuant to Section 10 must, in principle, include Confidential Information and must be publicly disclosed by the IOC. When disclosing such decisions, the IOC must: (i) not include any personal information of the victim without obtaining the victim’s consent, and (ii) anonymise personal information of other people concerned in certain cases, taking into consideration the privacy interests of such people concerned.
- d. Notwithstanding Section 11.c. above, Confidential Information related to Children must not be publicly disclosed.